

SPECIAL FEATURE
MATTHEW SCHNEIDER/LOS ANGELES

AUGUST 22, 1978

INTERNATIONAL CINEMA SYMPOSIUM

ANNCR: AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM TO DISCUSS THE IMPACT OF CINEMA ON SOCIETY WAS HELD IN BEVERLEY HILLS, CALIFORNIA LAST WEEK, (AUG. 14-18). VOA WEST COAST CORRESPONDENT MATTHEW SCHNEIDER HAS DETAILS.

VOICE: THE SETTING WAS THE IMPOSING OLD "GREYSTONE MANSION" THAT SERVES AS WESTERN HEADQUARTERS FOR THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE. IN A CROWDED CONFERENCE ROOM THAT WAS ONCE AN OIL BARON'S DEN, 13 TOP FILM MAKERS FROM 13 COUNTRIES SPENT THE BETTER PART OF A WEEK DISCUSSING---OFTEN PASSIONATELY---THE SUBJECT WHICH DOMINATES THEIR CREATIVE LIVES.

THE FILMMAKERS TRIED WITHOUT MEASURABLE SUCCESS TO GAUGE THE EFFECT THAT FILM HAS HAD ON SOCIETY IN THIS CENTURY.

OP
T.

THE DIRECTORS WHO TOOK PART WERE LINDSAY ANDERSON, ENGLAND; ALFONSO ARAU, MEXICO; MICHAEL CACOYANNIS, GREECE; AND YOUSSEF CHAHINE, EGYPT. ALSO ANDRE DELVAUX, BELGIUM; SUSUMU HANI OF JAPAN AND CLAUDE JUTRA, CANADA. JANUSZ MAJEWSKI OF POLAND NELSON PERRIRA DOS SANTOS, BRAZIL; CARLOS SAURA OF SPAIN AND OUSMANE SEMBENE, SENEGAL. AND MRINAL SEN OF INDIA AND AGNES VARDA, FRANCE. THE AMERICANS INCLUDED KING VIDOR AND ROUBEN MAMOULIAN.

ALL THE DIRECTORS AGREED THAT CINEMA HAS HAD A PROFOUND IMPACT ON LIFE IN THIS CENTURY. BUT AS EXPECTED THERE WERE VIGOROUS DIFFERENCES AMONG THE DIRECTORS AS TO HOW AND TO WHAT DEGREE.

VOICE: OUSMANE SEMBENE, THE MAN OFTEN CALLED THE FATHER OF AFRICAN
(CON'T) CINEMA, SAID FILMS HAVE DIFFERENT IMPACT IN DIFFERENT PLACES.
HE POINTED OUT THAT MOST FILMS PRODUCED OUTSIDE AFRICA HAVE
LITTLE MEANING TO AFRICANS BECAUSE THEY WERE MADE BY PEOPLE
WHO ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH LIFE ON THE CONTINENT. THAT, HE
ASSERTED, OUGHT TO BE REASON ENOUGH FOR AFRICANS TO SUPPORT
THE GROWTH OF THEIR OWN INFANT FILM INDUSTRIES.

MICHAEL COCOYANNIS, THE FIERY, CHAIN-SMOKING DIRECTOR OF
THE FILM, "ZORBA THE GREEK", COMPLAINED, WITH NODDING
AGREEMENT FROM HIS COLLEAGUES, THAT HIS PROBLEMS AS A
FILMMAKER ARE OFTEN CAUSED BY THE ECONOMICS OF THE INDUSTRY.
HE ARGUED THAT FINANCING DECISIONS ARE BASED ON THE PROBABLE
COMMERICAL APPEAL RATHER THAN THE ARTISTIC MERIT OF A GIVEN
FILM. ON THE OTHER HAND, MR. CACOYANNIS AND OTHERS POINTED
OUT THAT DIRECTORS IN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES FACED THEIR OWN
PROBLEMS WHICH STEM FROM GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF FILM
PRODUCTION.

THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC COMMENTS CAME DURING THE DISCUSSIONS
ON FILM EDUCATION.

ALL THE DIRECTORS AGREED THAT TRAINING OF FUTURE FILMMAKERS
WAS AN URGENT PRIORITY. THEY AGREED THAT FILM SCHOOLS WERE
NECESSARY AND DESIRABLE. THEY ALSO AGREED THAT FILM SCHOOLS
AROUND THE WORLD DON'T DO A VERY GOOD JOB. MOST FILM SCHOOLS,
THEY SAID, INHIBIT CREATIVITY. BUT THEY COULD OFFER NO
SPECIFIC IDEAS OF THEIR OWN TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION AND TO
BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THE CLASSROOM AND THE SOUNDSTAGE.
IN FACT, JANUSH MAJEWSKI AND MRINAL SEN VOICED SKEPTICISM

VOICE: ABOUT TRAINING "ARTISTS." SEN SAID, "ART CAN'T BE TAUGHT IN
(CON'T) A SCHOOL OF ACADEMY."

CARLOS SAURA SEEMED TO SUM UP THE DISCUSSION BEST WHEN HE SAID "EVERYONE HAS A DIFFERENT PERCEPTION OF WHAT A DIRECTOR SHOULD BE." NOTING THAT THE TRAINING OF FILMMAKERS IS VERY EXPENSIVE, HE PREDICTED DIFFICULT TIMES AHEAD FOR CINEMA EDUCATION. HE CAUTIONED THAT IF THE TREND CONTINUES, ONLY RICH---OR SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, WHERE THE GOVERNMENT PAYS-- WILL HAVE ENOUGH RESOURCES TO PROVIDE FILM TRAINING.

-0-

GH/GS